

extracurricular activities. This diverse upbringing has caught the eye of military academy leaders, as many of them now know our towns and schools by name.

Since the 1830s, Members of Congress have enjoyed meeting, talking with, and nominating those superb young people to our military academies. But how did this process evolve? In 1843, when West Point was the sole academy, Congress ratified the nominating process and became directly involved in the makeup of our military's leadership. The procedure, still used today, is a further check and balance in our democracy. It was originally designed to weaken and divide political coloration in the officer corps, provide geographical balance to our armed services, and to make the officer corps more resilient to the unfettered nepotism that had handicapped European armies.

In 1854, Representative Gerritt Smith of New York added a new component to the academy nomination process, the academy review board. This was the first time a Member of Congress appointed prominent citizens from his district to screen applicants and assist with the serious duty of nominating candidates for academy admission. Today, I am honored to continue this wise tradition in my service to the 11th Congressional District.

The Academy Review Board is composed of six local citizens, several of whom are distinguished veterans, who have shown exemplary service to New Jersey, their communities, and to the continued excellence of education in our area. Members of the board come from diverse backgrounds and professions, but they all share a common dedication that the best qualified and motivated graduates attend our academies. And, as true for most volunteer groups, their service goes largely unnoticed.

I would like to recognize these men and women and thank them publicly for participating in this important panel. Serving as board member requires hard work and an objective mind. They have the responsibility of interviewing over 50 outstanding high school seniors every year in the academy review process.

The nomination process follows a general timetable. Interested high school seniors mail personal information directly to the Military Academy, the Naval Academy, the Air Force Academy, and the Merchant Marine Academy. Information includes academic achievement, college entry test scores, and other relevant activities. At this time, they also inform my office of their desire to be nominated.

The academies then assess the applicants, rank them based on the data supplied, and return the files to my office with their notations. In late November, our Academy Review Board interviews all of the applicants over the course of 2 days. They assess a student's qualifications and analyze character, desire to serve, and other talents that may be hidden on paper.

This year the board interviewed 38 applicants. Nominations included ten to the Naval Academy, eight to the Military Academy, five to the Merchant Marine Academy, and five to the Air Force Academy; the Coast Guard Academy does not use the Congressional nomination process. The recommendations are then forwarded to the academies by January 31, where admissions staff reviewed files

and notified applicants and my office of their final decision on admittance.

As these highly motivated and talented young men and women go through the academy nominating process, never let us forget the sacrifice they are preparing to make. This holds especially true at a time when our nation is fighting the war against terrorism. The current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan serve as constant reminder that wars are fought by the young. And, while our military missions are both important and sometimes dangerous, it is reassuring to know that we continue to put America's best and brightest in command.

ACADEMY NOMINEES FOR 2009—11TH
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT NEW JERSEY
AIR FORCE ACADEMY

Nicholas A. Davis, Sparta, Sparta H.S.
Joseph W. Geib, Oak Ridge, Jefferson H.S.
Richard B. T. Margerison, Long Valley,
West Morris Central H.S.
Matthew D. Nafie, Basking Ridge, Ridge
H.S.

MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY

Ian M. Bland, Somerville, Somerville H.S.
Dalton R. Harbula, Parsippany, Parsippany
Hills H.S.
Yehudi Maldonado, Morristown, Morris-
town H.S.
Kevin M. McCormick, Lake Hopatcong,
Pope John XXIII H.S.
Ryan J. McCoy, Flanders, Roxbury H.S.
Andrew M. Seals, Long Valley, West Mor-
ris Central H.S.

MILITARY ACADEMY

Alex P. Filauero, Denville, Morristown
Beard.
John G. French, Jr., Denville, Morris
Catholic H.S.
Steven T. Godine, Whippany, Hanover
Park H.S.
Christopher A. Johnson, Chester, Home
Schooled.
Matthew D. Parsons, Green Pond, Morris
Knolls H.S.
Stephen E. Rogacki, North Caldwell, Seton
Hall Prep.
Luke T. Suczewski, Chatham, Delbarton
School.
Russell J. Tepper, Flanders, Mt. Olive H.S.

NAVAL ACADEMY

Kristen A. Asdal, Chester, West Morris
Mendham H.S.
Zachary GP Beecher, Randolph, Randolph
H.S.
William B. Brundage, New Vernon, Pingry.
Douglas F. Chesnulovitch, Sparta, Sparta
H.S.
Aaron Z. DeWitt, Califon, West Morris
Mendham H.S.
Robert F. Eckert, Parsippany, Parsippany
H.S.
Michael C. Jones, Basking Ridge, Ridge
H.S.
Jacob B. Levin, Madison, Madison H.S.
Marykate B. Moore, Chatham, Villa Walsh
Academy.
Jack A. Morado, West Caldwell, St. Bene-
dict's Prep.

A PROCLAMATION CONGRATU-
LATING MARTHA MILLER ON
ACHIEVING HER 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, Martha Miller will soon celebrate her 100th birthday; and

Whereas, she has been able to drive a car and maintain a home through her 97th year; and

Whereas, Martha Miller has volunteered as a poll worker through her 94th year; therefore, be it

Resolved that along with her friends, family, and the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I congratulate Martha Miller on achieving her 100th birthday, and for her contributions to her community and country.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CAN DO
BILL

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the Communities in Action Neighborhood and Opportunity bill, also known as the CAN DO bill. The Department of Justice reports that, on average, 45 people are shot and killed daily in America. Annually, there are 16,000–17,000 gun deaths in America.

The Communities in Action Neighborhood Defense and Opportunity Act is a comprehensive, community-based approach designed to address the issue gun violence. The bill calls for a four-pronged strategy in addressing gun violence in our nation's most crime-infested neighborhoods, including aggressive law enforcement, increased access to mental health and psychological counseling, additional employment training and job placement, and increased educational and recreational services for at-risk youth.

Madam Speaker, the issue of gun violence affects all Americans, white, black, Latino, Native American, and Asian. And gun violence pervades in all of our communities: urban, suburban, and rural. This issue is not a black or white issue, and it is not an urban or rural issue. This is an American issue that we must address with all of the resources we have at our disposal.

The research confirms that in order to effectively combat the causes of youth gun violence, there must be a holistic approach that provides not only aggressive law enforcement, but also provides at-risk youth with constructive alternatives to their dangerous lifestyles and gives them access to critical social services and programs.

This bill is unique in that it brings together the entire community to provide alternatives to youth by establishing partnerships between public and private agencies, businesses, community-based nonprofits, churches, schools, and universities. There is an 'all hands on' approach in order to get all of the stakeholders involved and provide a comprehensive and effective strategy that families and communities can support and get behind.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support the CAN DO bill and help end the destruction that is tearing apart so many of our communities. Americans of conscious must come together to stop the senseless death of "The Daily 45." When will we say "enough is enough, stop the killing!"